

UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
Board on Geographical Names
Washington 25, D. C.

12 March 1947

Director of Central Intelligence,
21st Street and Virginia Avenue, N. W.,
Washington 25, D. C.

Attention: Mr. Edgar.

My dear Sir:

As you suggested in our recent conversation, I am outlining here several problems regarding the continued contribution of this office to the solution of geographical name problems of the several Federal intelligence agencies.

1. Chinese personnel: This office for the past several years has employed a group of four native Chinese, on problems of Chinese place names for the Army Map Service, Corps of Engineers, under a Working Fund agreement. We have recently been advised that this service will no longer be required by the Map Service, because of completion of major programs of map compilation in this area, and we have therefore given notice of reduction in force to these employees, with separation to be effective April 6, 1947.

It seems regrettable, in view of the known problems of geographical names of China of the several intelligence agencies, particularly in the areas of western and northern China, and adjacent areas, that the services of these persons may be lost. Their experiences in the technical solution of geographical name problems cannot be readily replaced, and their loss will be keenly felt. It is suggested therefore, that if funds may be available from the Central Intelligence Group to continue the employment of all, or part, of the group, at least for the remainder of the current fiscal year, or until such time as other funds may become available, this personnel may be applied to problems of concern to the Central Intelligence Group. The yearly cost of this personnel in salary approximates \$15,00.

We feel that the security question regarding this alien personnel need not be a problem, since the research involved is exclusively one of the transcription, standardization and location of geographical names. This personnel has never had access to classified information.

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2. Geographical name information: As we indicated to you at the time of our meeting, we have noted a significant increase in the number of requests for geographical name information from Central Intelligence Group offices, since the issuance of your memorandum of August 30, 1946, regarding the use of BGN procedures. These requests have taken the form of requests for publications of this office, and for assistance in the solution of specific name problems through our telephone and mail information service. We have edited several long lists of names and have provided information on large numbers of individual telephoned requests. No effort has been made by this office to solicit requests for information, but we are informed that many of your various subdivisions do not use the service, because of lack of specific information or instruction.

Since 1943, this service has been financed with Working Funds allocated by the Corps of Engineers. Beginning with next fiscal year, that agency has indicated that it considers the performance of this service for only the War Department a proper charge against Engineer funds, but that they should not finance this service to others.

This office has requested an appropriation item to finance non-War Department inquiries for fiscal year 1948, but the chances of approval of the item do not appear promising. Since this service represents a material saving in convenience to the Central Intelligence Group and the groups under its jurisdiction, you may wish to inquire into the possibility of providing part of the funds for its continuance.

While we have been glad to supply such information in the past from available funds, subsequent additional increases in requests may necessarily have to be rejected. This would be unfortunate, since we believe that our facilities and techniques are the most efficient available for solution of what may be extremely expensive problems.

3. Janis editing: The Army Map Service also questions the propriety of its supporting, during the fiscal year 1948, the name editing work by BGN on publications of the Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Study Publishing Board. We have been informally advised by the Army Map Service that it does not consider this work to be a justifiable expense, since it benefits all participating agencies.

This office has participated in the preparation of these studies since their inception, and you are aware of the significance of our contribution. The work involved is the editing of the materials

to secure the necessary agreement of geographical names in manuscripts prepared by the contributing agencies working with heterogeneous sources of information. In addition, a complete gazetteer (Chapter XIII) is prepared to facilitate the use of each of the studies.

The cost involved in this work during the last calendar year approximates \$60,000 but this amount is being reduced gradually with the introduction of increasingly efficient methods.

Mr. Louis Quam, Director of the Joint Board, will gladly verify the above facts. He may be reached at the office of the Joint Intelligence Board, telephone War Department, extension 76958.

We appreciate your interest in the problems raised, and shall be glad to provide additional information regarding any of the above matters.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Meredith F. Burrill

Meredith F. Burrill,
Director.